

Utilities and Sustainability Task Force
Minutes from the May 17, 2007 Meeting

Next meeting: June 21, 2007, at BAWSCA, 155 Bovet Road, San Mateo

In attendance:

Bob Cormia, Sustainable Silicon Valley
Bill Dickenson, Belmont City Council
Deborah Gordon, Woodside City Council
Kathy Lavezzo, PG&E
Terry Nagel, Mayor of Burlingame
Richard Napier, C/CAG
Sepi Richardson, Brisbane City Council
Nicole Sandkulla, BAWSCA
Dianne Anderson, San Mateo County RecycleWorks (staff)
Kim Springer, San Mateo County RecycleWorks (staff)
Gina Blus, Consultant (staff)

Not in attendance:

Bruce Chamberlain, ABAG Energy Watch
Lori Duvall, Sun Microsystems
Jerry Hill, San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Mario Panoringan, Colma-Daly City Chamber of Commerce
Barbara Pierce, Mayor of Redwood City

Guests:

Roxane Cruz, PG&E Government Relations
Brandi deGarmeaux, USTF student intern
Dianne Dryer, Menlo Park
Tyler Hammer, Sustainable San Mateo County
Joe LaMariana, San Mateo County RecycleWorks
Ruth Peterson, Sustainable San Mateo County
Sally Tomlinson, Sustainable Silicon Valley
Juda Tolmasoff, Aide to Supervisor Jerry Hill

Actions items

Kathy Lavezzo and Kim Springer: organize the new ad hoc subcommittee on net-metering

Richard Napier & Staff: plan and deliver presentation to Menlo Park City Council

Staff: modify the Energy Strategy as directed and continue to add content

Notes

The April minutes were approved as amended. No public comment was offered.

C/CAG and cities

Rich Napier distributed a memo to USTF, CMEQ and the C/CAG Board of directors with information on local nonprofits active in climate protection. The memo is available at the USTF website, <http://www.ccacg.ca.gov/ustf.html>, under Task Force Reports.

Richard noted that the Energy Strategy will emphasize energy and cost savings, but will also reference AB32 (Global Warming Solutions Act) benefits, as a way to educate readers about the issues.

Burlingame has responded to the USTF recommendations approved by CMEQ and C/CAG and identified Terry Nagel as the elected official who will participate in the development of the Energy Strategy. Menlo Park has requested a presentation on USTF. Richard will have Nancy follow up with other cities next week, and will try to have an update for the next meeting.

Collaborative process between PG&E and cities

Roxane Cruz introduced herself as the new Government Relations liaison for San Mateo County jurisdictions. She plans to proactively provide information to cities about PG&E projects in their area, and encouraged cities to call her with questions about projects. She will attend USTF meetings to provide quarterly updates on project plans. Roxane will present the proposed system for regular communications at the June meeting. Her contact information is:

Office (415) 972-5201

Cell (650) 291-9894

Email rect@pge.com

Joint Venture Silicon Valley Network Climate Protection Task Force

Kim Springer reported that the task force kickoff meeting last week was well-attended. The information presented was similar to Seth Fearey's presentation to USTF in April, and the group (city staff members from ~ 2 dozen cities and others) agreed on a charter and next steps. It will meet again in July. Gina will send out minutes from the meeting and the group's updated charter.

CAISO stakeholder's meeting

Kathy Lavezzo provided a one-page summary of actions covered at the meeting (posted on the USTF website under Task Force Reports). The meeting provided info on upcoming PG&E maintenance and construction projects (none in San Mateo County) and explained how PG&E calculates its load forecast, as USTF heard from Jon Eric Thalman at the September 2006 USTF meeting.

CARB AB32 workshop

Kim Springer attended the California Air Resources Board webcast announcing the proposed list of discrete early actions, which are to be issued by July 1. Comments from

the business community warned of the potential negative economic impact, while environmental groups protested that the measures are not sufficient. The ARB website is at <http://www.arb.ca.gov/homepage.htm>; to be advised of upcoming workshops or reports, scroll down to the bottom of the blue column on the left hand side of the page to join the email list.

Net-Metering task force

Bill Dickenson explained the importance and status of net metering legislation in the state. Currently, state law prevents a self-generator (individuals or organizations with solar, wind, fuel cell or other alternative technologies) from applying the energy credits earned at a specific site to any other account. In Belmont's case, its corporation yard could accommodate a large solar array, but the credits earned there could not be applied to any of the city's numerous other accounts – only to the energy used at the yard. If the energy could be “sold back” to PG&E and then applied to other accounts, the payback period drops to just a few years.

Byron Sher won state approval for Davis to be exempted from this requirement, and Mark Leno pushed two bills to allow San Francisco to push its solar power back onto the grid and use it throughout the city. Bill is pursuing legislation for Belmont, but proposed that the county as a whole partner with PG&E to push legislation that would permit cities within San Mateo County to take advantage of net-metering.

The task force agreed to start an ad hoc subcommittee composed chaired by Bill and consisting of Rich Napier, Sepi Richardson, Deborah Gordon and Kathy Lavezzo from USTF, Sally Tomlinson from SSV and appropriate representatives from PG&E (whom Kathy will identify and recruit). The group was advised to look at current legislation and barriers, and to benchmark against other models used (e.g. in Europe), then make a proposal to C/CAG. If approved, the C/CAG lobbyist can push for its passage.

Kathy will call the meeting of the entire task force; Kim will coordinate among USTF members and serve as staff to the task force.

Bill also reported on Solar City, a Foster City-based solar installer that is offering deep discounts to residents when their projects aggregate to a specific number of kilowatts. The average installation in Woodside is 10 kW (compared to the usual 2 or 3 kW for residential systems); Portola Valley has also had many systems installed. Cities that promote Solar City within their communities earn a discount on their own systems. Each solar system's output is tracked online, along with the aggregated CO2 savings. The equipment is maintained by Solar City.

Committee co-chair(s)

Richard noted that most committees have a chair person, and as the profile of this committee increases, it would be appropriate to select a chair to serve as spokesperson

and work with staff to complete and roll out the Energy Strategy. Bill and Barbara Pierce were selected as co-chairs, effective as of the June meeting.

Feedback/edits to Energy Strategy

Terry found the draft logical and well-organized, but asked that it be tiered to make it more manageable – listing the low-hanging fruit first, then the next level of actions, etc. Richard noted that the ultimate document will include an executive summary, a section on the overall strategy, a list of specific actions which is broken down into levels and an extensive list of resources. He said the document needs to be easy to use and formatted to make the main points easy to absorb in just a few seconds.

Sepi noted that most cities aren't aware of USTF and that significant work will be needed to give cities the background. Richard agreed that it's time to actively get cities involved, before the document is completed.

Deborah said she has been telling those in Woodside who ask about what's being done about global warming to wait until the Energy Strategy is ready rather than begin research on their own. Kathy said that she and Bruce Chamberlain mention USTF whenever they present Energy Watch to cities. (Five new cities have enrolled in Energy Watch in recent months, and appointments are scheduled with San Bruno and Menlo Park.)

Other comments and suggestions:

- The grouping of cities is useful and might be a good way to organize meetings, educational forums and friendly competitions.
- Find colors that work well in a table or graph and use those for the group names. In the alternative, name the groups after shapes.
- Be sensitive to what cities have already done; be sure not to penalize early movers.
- Put case study details in a sidebar.
- Be specific about steps for cities to take, starting with adopting the resolution.
- Be very specific about the kind of work to be done, and provide cities with a menu of options, such as hiring staff, sharing staff, using interns, working with a citizen committee, etc.
- Acknowledge that 50% of greenhouse gases come from transportation, and that action on transportation and climate issues is needed. (Electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids blur the line.)
- Create a separate section for tracking, and recommend options. Recognize that consistency in tracking is critical to being able to measure progress across the county.

Roundtable

- Waste in landfills generates a substantial portion of greenhouse gas emissions in the state. The California Resource Recovery Association committee on global warming proposes regulating landfills instead of local diversion rates. Dianne

Dryer passed out copies of the plan, which is posted on the USTF website under Task Force Reports (url is listed above).

- Menlo Park has contracted with ICLEI and is beginning to do a baseline of its greenhouse gas emissions, as well as a forecast and climate action plan. It has signed the US Mayors Agreement on Climate Protection.
- The San Mateo County Times and KCBS both covered the activities of USTF this week.
- The Washington Post reported that the “wife test”-- where women are reluctant to convert to CFLs based on their perceptions or previous experiences with poor performing bulbs -- is a challenge to the adoption of compact fluorescent bulbs. Deborah suggested that cities could use signage in city facilities to help improve perceptions, and publicize preferred brands. (Similar to promoting ultra low-flow toilets to overcome perceptions that they don’t work.)
- Habitat for Humanity just completed 8 new homes in Brisbane, among 100 homes being built in the county, and all are very energy-efficient. Brisbane is remodeling its City Hall and will seek a LEED rating.
- The Hyatt and Sheraton in Burlingame are remodeling, and were willing to consider installing low-flow toilets if the payback period was 18 months or less. By including both the water and wastewater charges, Nicole’s analysis showed how to achieve that target.
- Woodside is ceding an acre of land to Redwood City for construction of high-density housing, which isn’t feasible given Woodside’s zoning.
- RecycleWorks is piloting a Green Business Certification program in six cities, starting at the end of June. The program will begin by serving hotels, motels, office space, retail, restaurants, cafes and auto repair facilities. Water and energy efficiency will be a major focus. The Green Business program will help raise awareness of the resources available to the business community to become more resource-efficient.
- Kathy demonstrated super-efficient LED holiday lights; she will bring chandelier-style CFLs to the next meeting.
- BAWSCA is publishing a CD on beautiful, water-efficient landscaping; Nicole will bring copies to the next meeting.
- Sustainable Silicon Valley educational forums are held monthly; the next is/was on Friday, May 18. Details about future events are available at <http://www.sustainablesiliconvalley.org>.

Topics at the next meeting

The PG&E/ municipal collaboration process -- Roxane Cruz, PG&E
Status on cities adopting the USTF recommendations-- Richard Napier
Update from the net-metering subcommittee – Bill Dickenson
Review of the latest installment of the Energy Strategy document – all
Discussion of rollout -- all